

Thos. R. Banister / Formerly

*(From Eastern Air Lines
Miami, Miami, July, 1945)*

BY MR. GILL:

Q. What is your name?

A. Guy Banister.

Q. Where do you reside?

A. 7059 Argonne, New Orleans, La.

Q. What is your profession?

A. I am an investigator and a criminologist.

Q. Have you had any special training in these fields?

A. Yes, I have attended numerous F.B.I. schools and other courses. I have been on the faculty of several universities.

Q. Have you ever been a member of the F.B.I.?

A. Yes, I was a Special Agent in Charge.

Q. What is a Special Agent in Charge?

A. A Special Agent in Charge bears the relationship to other Agents, as a General to his Private Soldiers.

Q. Are you acquainted with Captain Ferrie?

A. Yes, I am.

Q. How did you first become acquainted with Captain Ferrie?

A. I was retained first by him, and then by others, to investigate the criminal charges made against him. Later I was to investigate the charges made by Eastern Air Lines.

Q. Would you please enumerate the charges, from whatever source, that you investigated?

A. First I investigated the criminal charges. I reviewed the file of the District Attorney. I found they had no case and so informed them. I found that Eric Crouchet was not a stable individual and was the type who would frighten easily and under those circumstances do anything that he was told. I have spoken with him on numerous occasions. He insists the charges of crimes against nature are false.

I further learned that the instigator of these charges was one Mrs. Bessie. Previously she had charged a Y.M.C.A. super-

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visor in some matter. Then she allegedly broke up a Boy Scout Troop. As far as I can find out next in line was Captain Ferrie. Now strangely enough the name Mrs. Landry appears in charges against one John Cater.

Behind Mrs. Landry there was most certainly the influence of Communism. The tactic of the Communists is the big smear and the attempt to place a moral turpitude label on those they wish to "get". The District Attorney who kicked these matters off is no longer in office. However, he and his Executive Assistant have held numerous memberships in organizations identified by the Congress as Communist Fronts. You see, by accident, Captain Ferrie stumbled onto something big the Communists were doing in this port City of New Orleans. In his patriotism he meant to stop it. These charges resulted.

I also went into the matter of the so-called Intimidation of a Witness Charge and the Extortion Charge. Crouchet and Cater, the two State Witnesses, claim this never happened. Both persons insist that no such acts occurred, no such crimes were committed, and that they made no such charges.

Likewise, I went into Eastern's charges that Captain Ferrie made false statements in his employment application. These allegations proved utterly absurd. I found no employment at Rocky River High School, as charged. I found Ferrie left the seminary over a theological disagreement. I found no evidence of mental or emotional problems. The charges of an unauthorized CAP unit were ridiculous. There never was such an organization as the "Omnipotents". Someone simply fabricated this. Ferrie's abilities as a research psychologist are generally recognized.

I could find no "connection" as Eastern calls it, between Ferrie and the so-called "Cheramide case" which was never a case at all.

I found out that Ferrie did have a connection with the Landry case and that was in getting Landry to return home. Ferrie is a member of the Catholic Church in good standing and has never been excommunicated. The American Medical Association never heard of him much less warned him to stop practicing medicine. He did contrary with Eastern's report, deliver a speech before the

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speech went to completion

and was well-received.

Q. Have you found any evidence of moral turpitude in Captain Ferrie?

A. No after the most exhaustive search.

Q. Have other persons been interviewed in connection with this case and in regard to moral turpitude?

A. Yes.

Q. Kindly enumerate them and tell what you learned?

A. Mr and Mrs Barton, St. Thomas Stret, Gretna,
Mr. and Mrs. Finney, Shirely Drive, New Orleans
Mrs. Alameda Hudson, Vinet Street ← (K.C. Knight same block)
Janice Walder, of Loyola University
Mrs. Weigand, Robert E. Lee Bld, New Orleans
Mrs. Martens, Nashville Street, New Orleans,
Lawrence Marsh, Transcontinental Drive New Orleans
Johnny Johnson, St. Thomas Street, Gretna.
Layton Martens, Lafayette, Louisiana
Catherine Carter, a nurse
John Campbell, Loyola University New Orleans, La
Rev. Father Maquin, formerly Our Lady Perpetual Help
Rev. Father John Mulahy, Loyola University.
Rev. Father Arjonilla, now of Raceland, La.

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and everyone of these persons interviewed regarded Captain Ferrie as just, honest, trustworthy, highly moral, religious and in general a credit to himself, his community, his airline and his profession. This list could go on and on. It is only a partial list of those interviewed. Some of these names should be withheld at this time in case this matter goes to the Federal Courts.

Q. Is there any labor problem involved in this case?

A. Certain information suggests this possibility. It seems that Eastern Air Lines and American Air Lines have been attempting a merger. American is allegedly sponsoring an Allied Pilots Association in an attempt to "break" ALPA on American. Reports indicate that similar moves are underway on Eastern looking forward toward the merger. In this case, it is reported, Eastern is attempting to introduce a "moral turpitude" standard whereby a precedent would be set. If they win this case, then the door is open to fire pilots almost at will. A traffic violation will then become "moral turpitude". For you see, the precedent in this case is an attempt to establish the principle that what a pilot does on his own time, off the company property

is the company's business. Reports indicate that in Captain Ferris's case, if the company can successfully discharge him a precedent will be established. Then the company can fire a man who gets a traffic ticket. There is nothing to stop them.

Q. Would you supply proofs of what you have just said?

A. At this time I feel that it would be against Captain Ferris's best interests to reveal the sources of my information. Certain reports about Eastern's tactics in this case suggest considerable caution and discretion in revealing information.

Q. Have you investigated the matter of Eastern's "standard of conduct" which is expected of its employees?

A. Yes, I have.

Q. Would you outline or describe that so-called standard of conduct?

A. That is very difficult to do. No where can I find that Eastern has ever established a standard of conduct. There are no publications showing this, there are no contractual provisions to show it. However, if you consider what Eastern seems to condone in its personnel, then such a standard might be inferred.

Q. Would you outline the conduct that Eastern seems to condone, as you say?

A. It would be very unwise, and perhaps unnecessary to do this since it might mean dragging other people's lives into the open when that might not have to be done.

Q. We certainly do not want to hurt anyone in this case. Is it possible to reveal acts, or patterns of doing or conduct without disclosing names, or giving such information that might enable someone to readily identify these people?

A. Yes, I think it can be done in this way. I have a report of a pilot who is prominent who carried pornographic films across state lines in an Eastern airplane. He had a showing of these films for other pilots and his superiors knew about

it. There are reports of sexual intercourse between pilots and stewardesses on board the aircraft while in flight, cruising or climbing flight. This, in some cases, is a part of the so-called "Mile High Club". There are company officials who are married who are philandering and having relations with other company personnel where this has been generally talked about for years. There are crimes, or acts I should say, against nature. There is improper handling of power settings. There is a case of a prominent pilot on an overseas run using METO power until he reached cruising altitude. This involved DC-7 aircraft. There are reports of widespread petty smuggling across national boundaries. There are public displays in hotel lobbies, such as a pilot down on all fours biting a stewardess in the buttocks. There are reports of a group of pilots participating in land deals where illegal transferring of funds from one account to another takes place, or had to take place to conduct the transactions. There are reports from hotels in several cities where pilots lay over of unbecoming, and/or immoral activities. There are numerous reports of horseplay in the cockpits including the fining of some Captains who had stewardesses on their laps in flight while passengers were aboard. There are even reports of violations of the kidnap laws by company officials or agents, while on company business. The reports show that these things enumerated are either known to company officials or have been reported to company officials and that the personnel involved were never sanctioned or disciplined. Hence, I can only conclude that the foregoing represents an indication of Eastern's standard of conduct for its employees.

Q. Have you found where Captain Ferrie has ever in any way engaged in any of the activities which you describe?

A. As far as it is humanly possible to investigate Captain Ferrie has never participated in any of the things described.

Q. How would you define "moral turpitude?"

A. It is any intentional act, I repeat the word intentional, against justice, honesty or good morals which acts are in themselves unjust dishonest or immoral.

Q. Have you investigated Captain Ferrie's life, background and conduct in regard to moral turpitude?

A. Yes I have.

Q. What did you find?

A. Captain Ferrie is not guilty of moral turpitude.

Q. You have examined Captain Ferrie's reputation in the community, have you not?

A. Yes I have.

~~Q. And what did you find?~~

A. I find he has the highest of reputations for his life, his philosophy and his conduct. He has brought respect to the airline pilot profession.

Q. How does he bring respect to his profession?

A. Such things as his learning, his abilities and his civic interest. A lot of people think of airline pilots as harumscarum people obsessed with sex, salary and seniority. Captain Ferrie has set the lie to this notion.